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Resituating cultural landscapes: Pan-European strategies for sustainable management

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ABSTRACT: Integrating stakeholders as the active creators and beneficiaries of cultural landscapes is an under-developed element of sustainable heritage research. Through work focusing on some of the most significant monuments in European history (Late Iron Age oppida: c.200BC-AD60), this paper will explore how communities (including farmers, small-medium enterprises (SMEs), wildlife organisations and residents) understand and experience cultural landscapes.

Focusing on perceptions data from Bagendon and Salmonsbury, UK, these oppida sites represent the pilot phase of the EU funded REFIT project, and work on 2 further sites, Bibracte (France) and Ulaca (Spain), will follow. The perceptions studies will examine how existing understanding and use of these cultural landscapes can aid the integration of non-archaeological stakeholders into wider archaeological research and support the development of future cultural landscape management strategies, at a pan-European level, that offer greater mutual benefit to all those with a vested interest in cultural landscapes.

1 INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE REFIT PROJECT

The 'Resituating Europe's first towns' (REFIT) project aims to generate innovative strategies for the sustainable management of cultural landscapes through integrating the perceptions and knowledge of diverse stakeholders into the research process. The work represents a Heritage Plus, EU Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage funded research co-operation between Durham University (UK), Bibracte EPPC (France) and Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain), plus multiple associate partners. Using Late Iron Age oppida as the vehicle, the project aims to address how communities engage with and understand cultural landscapes. Recognising that the ecology, heritage and wildlife of these landscapes cannot be divorced from each other or their economic value, the research aims to develop a broader understanding of the perceptions and needs of stakeholders whilst integrating them into archaeological research. Building on best-practice, the project team will implement a range of engagement strategies and resources at 4 case study sites: Bibracte (France); Ulaca (Spain) and Bagendon & Salmonsbury in the UK (Fig. 1), through which knowledge transfer will be enhanced and strategies for the sustainable management of oppida cultural landscapes and their contemporary land use developed. The ultimate aim of the research is to transfer the knowledge and expertise regarding ways of enhancing the socio-cultural, environmental and economic impact of cultural landscapes to other (including non-oppida) landscapes across Europe through integrating stakeholders into sustainable landscape management processes. This paper will outline the theoretical background of the project and discuss the findings of the pilot perceptions study, which took place at the two UK sites, to highlight how the research will move towards generating wider strategies for best practice within the management of cultural landscapes.

2 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES: SHIFTING IDEOLOGY

Since the latter half of the 20th century there has been a major shift in the way that influential international bodies, such as the United Nations and the European Union, are conceiving and classifying sites and landscapes. Breaking down the imposition of 18th century, Western European positivist science and the Enlightenment nature / culture dichotomy (Hamilton, 1992), this repositioning moves beyond an 'aesthetic' objectifying approach to 'natural' landscapes and addresses the notion of 'landscape-as-culture' (Waterton, 2005: 212). As a result, the term 'cultural landscape' has been prominent for some time (e.g. Fairclough and Rippon, 2002). What has been lacking, however, is dedicated work which explores how people engage with these cultural landscapes.

Catalysed by discussions at the 1992 World Heritage Convention (Fowler, 2003), a cultural landscape can be defined, most simply, as a landscape shaped by both nature and human action (UNESCO, 2009). Cultural landscapes therefore make up most of the earth's surface – everywhere there is interaction between humans and their environment. Recognition of this interaction is significant as it acknowledges that landscapes, including all their diverse attributes: ecology, natural resources, economics, heritage, influence on people's sense of identity, belief systems and well-being, cannot be divorced from each other.

Growing interest in the cultural landscapes approach has also influenced other important developments in terms of protecting the environment as a 'lived-in' and 'working' resource, such as the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000). These initiatives have, in turn, shaped various national policies and begun to guide strategies in the development of more integrated and sustainable landscape management frameworks (e.g. Natural England, Historic England, Le Réseau des Grands Sites de France).

Work into 'ecosystem services', i.e. the benefits (both tangible and intangible) that people derive from ecosystems, dates from the mid-1960s (Hernández-Morcillo et al., 2013) but came into much wider use during the 2000s as a result of the United Nations Millennium Ecosystems Assessment (MA, 2005). In the context of the cultural landscapes addressed by the REFIT project, many of the heritage values at stake flow directly from the character and function of the ecosystems concerned (aesthetic qualities, local distinctiveness, seasonality, biodiversity values, water quality etc.). Many other heritage values also arise from the intimate interconnections between ecological factors and human habitation, resource use and social development (shaping of settlements and communities by availability of food, water, natural shelter; beliefs, traditions and practices associated with the natural world, transmission of special skills and knowledge; cultural expressions and artistic representations, symbols of identity and belonging, etc.) and reveal the importance of incorporating ecosystem services strategy when considering issues of sustainable cultural landscape management.

In terms of more formalised approaches to cultural landscapes, many EU nations have specific strategies which financially incentivise farmers to adjust their activities to make them more sympathetic to environmental/wildlife/heritage concerns. These come under the umbrella of the European Community's agri-environment programme, which funds aspects of environmental protection and green farming (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/envir/measures/index_en.htm). Interpretation of the EU goals is defined by nations to suit their specific needs. In the UK, for example, this manifests as Countryside Stewardship schemes, which Natural England (in partnership with DEFRA) have been managing since 1991 (Natural England, 2016). In France, initiatives towards agro-ecology have provided the focus but have been much slower to take off, only gaining pace since the election of Francois Holland (GAIN report, 2013). As huge swathes of Europe, and indeed the areas under study as part of the REFIT project, are part of farming landscapes, an awareness of the growing influence of agri-environment strategies is therefore essential in guiding the cultural landscape approach of this research.

Shifting attitudes to the specifics of heritage management also sit alongside these theoretical and policy changes regarding management of the environment. During the last three decades, the importance of integrating non-archaeological stakeholders into heritage management process from the bottom up has become increasingly recognised (Gero et al., 1983; Karp et al., 1992; Meskell, 1998). It is now generally accepted that when a range of voices are involved in cultural resource management (CRM) that more sustainable, mutually beneficial results can be

achieved (Marshall, 2002; Sebastian and Lipe, 2010; King, 2011; Tully & Ridges, 2016). Heritage-based work that looks at the socio-cultural aspects of how people engage with their surroundings therefore also has a lot to offer in terms of guiding the REFIT project's cultural landscape work (e.g. Waterton, 2005; Witcher, 2010a/b).

The developments outlined above are extremely positive in terms of stakeholder-centered approaches to the sustainable management of cultural landscapes, and yet cultural landscape, ecosystems services and heritage research remains, on the whole, highly theoretical. While this does not inhibit the production of valuable work, in-depth research into the significance of landscapes/ecosystems/heritage to local stakeholders is still overshadowed by professional delimitations of 'sites', 'environmental issues' and landscapes' 'aesthetic qualities' (Ross, 1995: 9-17). Where work has been carried out with 'non-expert' stakeholders into perceptions of sites and landscapes, whether within the fields of heritage, tourism, ecosystems services or the environment, data collection has tended to focus on national/international campaigns that assess broad trends rather than building up a more detailed picture through location-specific, in-depth stakeholder research (e.g. <http://hc.historicengland.org.uk/>; <https://www.visitbritain.org/england-research-insights>; <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/Index-2.html>). The REFIT project is therefore taking active steps to address these imbalances in the foci and methodologies applied to cultural landscape research. By working with stakeholders, uniting different disciplinary approaches to cultural landscapes and gathering perceptions data that moves beyond the anecdotal, the project therefore hopes to offer practical solutions to the underrepresentation of cultural landscapes and their associated communities in heritage/landscape legislation and management that have sustainability at their core.



Figure 1. Map of the case study sites.

3 OPPIDA: A VEHICLE FOR EXPLORING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Late Iron Age oppida (c.200BC–AD60 see Collis, 1984; Fichtl, 2005; Fernández-Götz, 2014; Moore 2012) are essentially large, ditched complexes, both enclosed and unenclosed, which encompassed multiple activities, from residential areas to farming, and are often described as pre-historic Europe's first 'towns'. Owing to their large size, some of which extend over 200 hectares, oppida landscapes are particularly challenging to manage. This problem is compounded by the often ephemeral nature of oppida remains, which are difficult for non-specialists to interpret. As such, oppida represent some of the most important yet poorly understood monuments in European history.

While important, focusing on the archaeological narratives of oppida landscapes alone does not address the interplay between past and present land use or reflect how those using and inhabiting these landscapes are as much a part of it as its 'natural/built/historical' features. Thus, through engaging with the range of stakeholders - from farmers and wildlife experts to local residents and leisure users - within the 4 case study areas, the REFIT project will explore how each of these cultural landscapes is currently used, understood and managed. This is significant as while an archaeological component of these cultural landscapes has provided the starting point, the focus in fact centres on integrating archaeological narratives alongside enhanced understanding of tangible and intangible, non-static cultural landscape values and practices: farming/economy; wildlife; leisure/society. The interdependence of all these elements is equally vital to the research in terms of disseminating knowledge about these cultural landscape and looking at how they are, or can be, managed sustainably to continually adapt to the needs of the people/wildlife/activities which shape, and are being shaped by, cultural landscapes.

4 THE UK PILOT: PERCEPTIONS OF BAGENDON AND SALMONSBURY

The two UK case study locations were selected to pilot the REFIT approach. Although spatially close (less than 15 miles apart), the contexts of Bagendon and Salmonsbury, in the Cotswolds area of the UK, are quite different, making them ideal in terms of trialing a methodology that is adaptable to other locations.

Situated on the interface between the Cotswold Hills and Thames Valley, Bagendon is a 'sprawling' site, encompassing various dyke systems, c. 4km of earthworks and evidence of diverse past activity from coin minting to farming. Covering an area thought to be as large as 200ha, the site was ideally located to access two very different landscapes and is on a routeway between south-eastern and western Britain (Moore, 2014). Its scale and range of use, dating from the mid-1st century AD, mean the site is commonly defined as a 'territorial/polyfocal' oppida. Bagendon was probably the social and political centre of the *Dobunni* people until after the Roman invasion when a new local 'capital' was established less than 4 miles away at Corinium (modern day Cirencester). This relocation did not mean the end for Bagendon, as a number of high status Roman villas have been excavated nearby, suggesting the continued importance of the area (Trow et al., 2009). The village church, the earliest parts of which date to the early Saxon era, was renewed in the Norman period, with further additions in the 15th and 18th centuries, suggesting that the area continued to be of some significance.

Today, Bagendon is perhaps best described as a 'textbook' Cotswolds sleepy village with around 239 inhabitants, according to the last census (2011). The surrounding land comprises pastoral and arable fields (managed by both tenant and landowner farmers some of whom have agreements on parts of the land within Natural England's various Countryside Stewardship schemes, see Natural England, 2016), private fields used for horse paddocks and non-commercial livestock, as well as gardens, public footpaths, bridal ways and forested areas. The overwhelmingly post-medieval, 'rural village' cultural landscape that appears to dominate the visual character of Bagendon today, however, undoubtedly disguises the area's great historic significance as an urban centre. Much of the evidence for this great past is either invisible or hard to identify for the untrained eye. Parts of the oppidum's standing earthworks are 'scheduled' under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (AMAAA) (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46), which restricts some of the contemporary activities that can take place, and the landowners who are part of agri-environment schemes follow par-

ticular environmental and preservation-related strategies on their land (Natural England, 2016). However, even the standing remains are difficult to interpret and while people do visit the village it is by no means a tourist hub like other areas of the Cotswolds, and those passing through come primarily to explore the church or make use of the footpaths. Owing to multiple land ownership and diverse land use, at present there is no unified approach to the management of the area and no forum through which the heritage, agricultural, social and personal values attached to the cultural landscape can be shared.

Salmonsbury, while only 15 miles to the northeast, presents a very different cultural landscape scenario. Situated in a low-lying position close to the confluence of the Dikler and Windrush valleys, Salmonsbury is typical of what are known in Britain as ‘enclosed oppida’ and is quite different in size, form and development to polyfocal oppida like Bagendon (Collis, 1984). Double ditches and banks enclose an area of around 23ha with a further 6ha enclosed by an outer annexe protected by horn-work ramparts. Excavations in the 1930s demonstrated that some of the occupation dates to the Middle Iron Age (4th-1st century BC) with the ramparts probably dating to the Mid- to Late Iron Age, perhaps enclosing an existing unenclosed settlement (Dunning, 1976). Even though much smaller in size, Salmonsbury received imports akin to those found at Bagendon during the Late Iron Age, suggesting the site had a similar status in local society. The site also appears to have had long-standing significance as evidenced by the Neolithic causewayed camp, early Bronze Age finds and early Iron Age occupation revealed through excavation and geophysics. Salmonsbury is also a named landmark in local Saxon charters and, during the Medieval period, provided both the location and name of the Court of the Hundred in which Bourton-on-the-Water lies (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1017340>).

The modern village of Bourton-on-the-Water, also known as the ‘Venice of the Cotswolds’, dates from the Medieval period and, like Bagendon, visually overshadows the earlier history of the area. Today the village has a population of over 3000, includes 117 listed buildings and is a hotspot for tourists who come from all over the world to admire its charm. The village reaches the boundaries of Salmonsbury which, since 2003, has been under the management of the Gloucester Wildlife Trust. As well as the scheduled ancient monument of Salmonsbury, the site includes the Salmonsbury Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is a working, organic dairy farm with a state-of-the-art robotic milking machine. Owing to the fact that the site is owned by one organisation, Salmonsbury has a much more unified management plan and vision for the future sustainability of the site, which integrates farming, public access, wildlife and history. Nonetheless, as with Bagendon, the archaeology is difficult to understand and compared to the number of tourists who visit the village of Bourton-on-the-Water, Salmonsbury (Greystones Farm) is relatively unknown and unvisited beyond local users. Similarly, communicating all of the different aspects that go to make the cultural landscape of Salmonsbury what it is today is a complex task which involves a range of stakeholders with very different needs, from the tenant farmer who runs the dairy herd to the local people who come to walk their dogs. The various ‘layers’ of this dynamic at Salmonsbury and the other case study locations can only be fully understood by working closely with the different stakeholders to draw out perspectives and incorporate a wider range of views into both the interpretation and management of these cultural landscapes.

5 METHODOLOGY: THE UK PILOT

The methodology for the REFIT project can be divided into four main parts: 1, the perceptions study (the focus of this paper), which aims to reveal through surveys, participatory mapping, digital image profiling and interviews/focus groups, how different stakeholders understand, use and manage these cultural landscapes today and to draw out their hopes for the future; 2, to use the perceptions data to design, in collaboration with stakeholders, engagement activities (events, digital guides, resources) that will raise awareness of all the different aspects that comprise these cultural landscapes (history, ecology, farming, local life etc.); 3, to carry out summative evaluation through surveys and follow up interviews to see if engagement activities have enhanced understanding of the multiple functions of cultural landscapes and influenced thinking on sustainable management; 4, to extend the approach to the REFIT project’s other

sites and use the combined data to propose best practice for sustainable cultural landscape management in a wider European landscape context.

The methodology draws on techniques from a cross-disciplinary range of cultural landscape/heritage research in order to meet ethical standards and work with stakeholders in the most productive and mutually beneficial way (e.g. Crang, 2006; Tully, 2007; Hernández-Morcillo et al., 2013; Duxbury et al., 2015). Acknowledging the problems of quantitative research methods in terms of simplifying data through seemingly deterministic conclusions (Morgan et al., 1993: 16), and the potential for highly subjective, researcher-led interpretations of meaning-based qualitative methodologies, a combination of the two approaches is being employed to produce the best possible ‘balance’ of social research (Philip, 1998: 273). This is coupled with self-awareness and self-reflexivity on the part of the researchers and involves standardisation of the methodology across all the case study sites.

As it is not possible to provide a full analysis of the perceptions data within the limitations of this paper, the following section will focus on highlighting the key themes which have emerged from interviews and focus groups with almost 60 different stakeholders connected to the cultural landscapes of Bagendon and Salmonsbury. Stakeholders were specifically targeted to encompass as wide a range of interests, land uses and demographics as possible, including: landowners/farmers, tenant farmers, local residents and Parish Council representatives, local politicians, employees and volunteers for wildlife organisations, groups connected to the preservation of the beauty of the Cotswolds, archaeologists and heritage professionals, local students of archaeology and British wildlife, local business people, school teachers and leisure users (including metal detectorists). While the nature of the Cotswolds means participants were predominantly from white, affluent backgrounds, their different experiences of engaging with the landscape meant that responses to questions were quite varied and highlighted areas of both agreement and conflict in terms of current and future strategies for landscape management.

Interviews and focus groups lasted between 1-2 hours in which time participants were asked 17 set questions designed to meet the aims of the project’s research goals. The questions fell into two main categories: 1 – levels of understanding relating to the term cultural landscape, oppida and current management strategies/policies connected to the cultural landscape; 2 – personal perceptions of the value, importance and future direction of the cultural landscape in question and suggestions for enhancing the management and dissemination of different types of knowledge as well as increasing sustainability.

In order to create a balance between the academic voice and the diverse, ‘lived’ voices of participants, the following analysis will include direct, unedited, quotes from participants who will be identifiable in the manner they defined their main connection with the case study landscape, e.g. Bagendon resident, local landowner, farmer. Factors such as age or gender will only be raised if highlighted by the participant or if directly relevant to the discussion. While only a fraction of the interview texts can be represented here, this more ethnographic approach aims to reveal the social context of the research and expose the research agenda. The analysis also recognises that participants are likely to provide what they see as the ‘best’ or most ‘noble’ answers to questioning (Bourdieu & Darbel, [1969] 1991: 3). This can be countered to an extent by representing the full range of views and highlighting contradictions and conflicts within the data (Abu-Lughod, 1991, 1993: 1, 32). Thus, while the output is shaped by the REFIT research agenda, it is hoped that the palimpsest approach to analysis reveals the collaborative nature of the work rather than transforming people into statistics and reinforcing divisions between the public and academic spheres.

6 THE UK PILOT PERCEPTIONS: KEY FINDINGS

The majority of the research questions focus on personal perceptions as this is where the real potential to unlock stakeholders’ views of the meanings and management of cultural landscapes lies. However, the inclusion of 3 questions pertaining to levels of technical understanding were vital to situate these personal reflections within the framework of existing knowledge of the central themes: oppida, cultural landscapes and landscape management approaches, and to complement the findings of wider survey work. Analysis will therefore

begin by assessing stakeholders' levels of understanding of the technical elements associated with the research, before moving on to the more complex synthesis of perceptions.

As the project's focus is on cultural landscapes, with specific reference to oppida, it was very important to see if those who did not have to deal with heritage-related issues on a regular basis had heard either of the two terms and could describe them. The project researcher was very careful not to include the terms oppidum, oppida or cultural landscapes in any of the pre interview/pre focus groups correspondence or in the project information and informed consent forums. This does not mean however, that some participants did not decide to do a little preliminary research to ensure they were informed before their consultation took place and needs to be kept in mind during the following discussion.

Regarding Bagendon, 48% of stakeholders interviewed were in positions in which they had direct dealings with the oppidum, either due to employment connected with archaeology/heritage or through stewardship agreements related to farming practice with Natural England. Taking those stakeholders without this type of connection to the landscape as a whole, 50% had heard the term oppidum but could not describe one, 25% were able to describe (with varying levels of accuracy) what an oppidum is and 25% had never heard the word. At Salmonsbury, 39% of respondents were in positions with expert knowledge of the history of the site. For those remaining, 9% were able to describe an oppidum, 35% had heard the term but were unsure how to define it, and 56% had no familiarity with the word. Both sites (Bagendon in particular) reveal how awareness of the existence of an oppidum within the landscape is quite high. What is lacking, however, is any real depth of knowledge of what these archaeological features are and how they relate to their physical traces within the landscape today. Interestingly, regarding cultural landscapes, the term was unfamiliar to the majority of participants, including many archaeologists, wildlife and environmental professionals, with only 22% of stakeholders at Bagendon and 16% at Salmonsbury stating they had encountered the term before. However, when asked to describe what a cultural landscape might be – irrespective of whether participants had heard the term before – every single stakeholder came up with a personal reflection on cultural landscapes that was very close to the accepted 'definition' – a landscape shaped by both nature and human action. This is illustrated below by the selection of quotes from across a range of stakeholders who were made aware of 'cultural landscapes' as a 'concept' for the first time:

"To me a "cultural landscape" is any landscape that has had human intervention in the past or over time..." (Museum professional)

"[It is] more than just the physical landscape, it is the manmade things that go on top of it, so it could be small farm buildings, horse sheds[...]also public access paths, things like long barrows and Roman villas, even if they are underneath it!" (Bagendon resident)

"I suppose it is a landscape that's been altered by humans/shaped by human life really, not totally natural" (Tenant farmer - Bagendon)

"It is the footprint of humankind in the landscape, on the landscape, and how this progresses through time...how the landscape is continually adapted and changed to suit people's needs" (Metal detectorist and student of archaeology)

"It's the lumps and bumps and what is underneath them. How the landscape has evolved and why" (Volunteer – Greystones Farm/Salmonsbury).

These reflections on awareness of the terms oppida/oppidum and cultural landscapes may seem minor but they are significant at least in terms of the British context of this research. Firstly, they tell us that a great deal of work is still needed to raise the public profile of oppida beyond the reach of existing methods of disseminating archaeological information (e.g. websites such as <http://www.oppida.org/index-en.html#>, display panels at sites and in museums, academic texts and more popular media output: TV, radio, blogs etc.). This issue is relevant to many complex, ephemeral (mainly prehistoric) monuments across Europe as communities are unlikely to reflect seriously on the deep heritage of a cultural landscape within future management ap-

proaches if they cannot relate to the people and activities that took place there. The fact that continuity is visible through factors such as boundaries and land use between elements of oppida and contemporary landscapes at the case study sites should enhance the integration process, but low levels of knowledge currently remain a significant barrier.

In terms of cultural landscapes, the data clearly demonstrates how even without conscious awareness of increased academic and policy-based interest in cultural landscapes approaches, stakeholders understand the impact of people on the landscape and the mutual impact of the landscape on people over time. Acknowledgement of this interrelationships is central to the aims and ultimate success of the REFIT project as it will only be possible to bring different landscape uses and values together if those who have a say in future management strategies understand that no one action – human or environmental – affects the landscapes in isolation.

Awareness of British laws and national initiatives aimed at the management of cultural landscape like Bagendon and Salmonsbury, was the final area of questioning which assessed levels of understanding related to the ‘technical’ aspects of the research. The majority of stakeholders (92% at both Bagendon and Salmonsbury), irrespective of background, were familiar with at least one aspect of heritage/SSSI/AONB/agri-environment related agreements connected to the current management of their cultural landscape. Unsurprisingly, however, beyond the farmers/landowners, wildlife and heritage professionals, stakeholders were unable to explain what these designations/schemes entailed and how they are translated ‘visibly’ within the cultural landscape. Even regarding the responses of those with first-hand experience of working within areas under scheduling and/or stewardship schemes, there were still many areas of confusion about exactly what these processes entailed and how they could impact on other landscape features and practices:

“Greystones is an interesting case because it is Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust managed, so in a way it is protected because it is owned by the Trust. It is different at Bagendon as there are many farms associated with the land. I confess I don’t know how it [the land] is managed... I know it can be quite different depending on the person and the values they place on the land and the archaeology” (Museum professional).

“Half the farm (Greystones) is a SSSI which has its own constraints and rules and regulations... I also think they are in a Higher Level Stewardship scheme but I don’t know for certain or what that entails... There is an archaeological strand to it, though I’m not greatly aware and not greatly interested to be honest” (Greystones volunteer)

“We are in a SSSI area, I think, and the house is in the conservation area...I think everything in the conservation area is listed, the church is Grade I. We’re not in any [stewardship] schemes, they can be a way for farmers to get a bit of EU money and help, so if you want to do improvements and tidy things up and you get a bit of money coming through, that’s good, but it wasn’t for us” (Bagendon landowner/resident)

Related to the above understanding/lack of understanding of policies connected to cultural landscapes is the issue of ‘sustainable landscape management’. This is a theme that actually crossed both the ‘perceptions’ and ‘levels of knowledge’ categories of questions as when asked what the term meant to individuals from a personal perspective, the majority of stakeholders first response was that they had never really thought about. However, as with the issues of cultural landscapes, every participant went on to express clear views on the issue as evidenced in the quotes below:

“The primary concern is to make sure people can continue to farm and earn their living from the landscape but reduce the impact on wildlife and the archaeology.” (Professional archaeologist)

“Amazing word sustainable, what does that mean? For me, I’d like to see a balance between leisure uses of the countryside and the land and the productive side – seeing animals and crops growing.” (Local resident – Bagendon)

“For a site like Greystones (Salmonsbury), sustainable landscape management is something that keeps all the elements of interest in tact, accessible and in good health for as long as possible...” (Environmental professional)

“I suppose in terms of farming, sustainable management would mean keeping it within what you can do while staying economically viable, economics must be the main driving force. Sustainable could also mean unspoilt – let’s not mess around with it – let’s keep it [the landscape] so people can still see the history” (Greystones volunteer)

“Being sustainable allows it [the landscape] to naturally progress.” (Archaeology student)

“I suppose it is maintaining the land in a reasonable state so it can be used productively by the next lot that comes along” (Tenant Farmer – Bagendon)

“Sustainability is very much a soil thing, it’s a weather thing, it’s a people thing, it’s allowing the land to be managed in an efficient way in that it isn’t losing money but is not being ‘done to death’.” (Local politician)

The lack of awareness relating to heritage protection laws and agri-environment schemes, how they are supported and what they aim to achieve is problematic. As with the issue of oppida/ephemeral archaeological sites, a lack of understanding means that the huge potential to integrate different and yet sympathetic landscape management/use features is perhaps overlooked. On the plus side, however, the fact that every stakeholder, without exception, had an opinion on what sustainable landscape management entails – mainly relating to maintaining a landscape in good condition for future generations – reveals that it is an important issue that stakeholders are willing to engage with and is in need of further exploration, which will be facilitated through the REFIT project.

Moving on to the more qualitative, perceptions based questions, an observation that was raised many times by a range of different stakeholders was the unique nature of the Cotswold landscape; the seemingly harmonious nature of the built and natural environment (the Cotswold stone and the fields), and how its unique beauty and internationally known ‘brand’ helps to protect it in terms of encouraging sympathetic farming, wildlife initiatives, tourism activities and the maintenance of heritage assets as outlined in the quotes below:

“There is a balance between the natural world and the manmade world...the buildings and the landscape just sort of fit together, it is a harmonious landscape.” (Environmental professional)

“It is nice to think there was a large pre-Roman encampment there [Bagendon] and that they were probably sheep farming, like us. There is a deep history and connection between farming and archaeology, buildings and field, then and now.” (Tenant farmer)

“The Cotswolds is such a well-known brand nationally and internationally...[this] is very useful as we don’t have to push very hard to guide change in landscape management.” (Environmental professional)

“The animals, the landscape, the fields as agricultural fields, the buildings – it (Bagendon) is just outstanding as a ‘package’!” (Local resident – Bagendon)

The fact that the wider landscape is perceived as beautiful, historic and important for wildlife, rural life and tourism is significant and suggests great willingness for different types of ‘users’ to work together. It will be interesting to see, therefore, if this sort of integrated personal appreciation of cultural landscapes exists at the other case study sites and whether stakeholders appreciate the potential for further collaboration that would facilitate the aims of the REFIT project.

Returning to the UK pilot, the beginnings of more unified approaches to sustainable landscape management were made clear. This was not only evident through the management initiatives of the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust at Salmonsbury, but within individual stakeholders' working/daily lives and their aspirations for management change to their cultural landscapes. Interestingly, the number of comments on positive initiatives and collaborations between stakeholders greatly outweighed those highlighting areas of clash and conflict, and are demonstrated in the selection of quotes:

"Protecting [archaeological] sites should be done in conjunction with the farmers to make sure the archaeology is not damaged but nor are the farmers livelihoods." (Archaeological professional)

"Bagendon has a whole host of landowners who all have perhaps totally different objectives but it still works. I think that is because the land use is about tending stock and looking after animals as part of the community" (local resident – Bagendon)

"If you raise awareness of the wildlife and the farming, you raise awareness of the archaeology and vice versa." (Wildlife student)

"By valuing your landscape you automatically value the other things. We already know that British tourism is worth much more than farming, but tourism uses the farming landscape as its background." (Environmental professional)

"People, like us (farmers), help wildlife if they can; that is part of working in the countryside... Wildlife-friendly farming can actually increase yield." (Farmer/landowner - Bagendon)

"At Greystones, they have informal partnerships with other farmers on the land next to the river and we [the volunteers] can help the farmers manage the land and do things they could not do otherwise." (Greystones Volunteer and local resident – Bourton-on-the-Water)

While the mind-set of the stakeholders at Bagendon and Salmonsbury is clearly conducive to enhancing collaboration, and people recognise how the different landscape interests – farming, wildlife, heritage and leisure – can help sustain landscapes, there is a great deal of work still to be done to turn what is essential 'good-will' into more long-term, sustainable approaches to managing these cultural landscapes. Yet again, stakeholders have a range of practical suggestions for how these landscapes could be better managed with an eye on the future that ensures that different landscape needs are met without having a negative impact on the current aesthetic 'value' of the Cotswold landscape that people know and love:

"Open farm days would promote understanding...it is the same with wildlife and archaeology as it is easier to get people engaged interactively if you want to share knowledge with the public." (Farmer)

"There could be a display cabinet with information and objects in the village showing how things looked and worked back through the ages." (Local resident - Bagendon)

"It would be good to have information to make people aware of what they are doing and what effect they have on wildlife, farm animals (because of their dogs) and site erosion." (Wildlife student)

"Greystones (Salmonsbury) could be part of a village trail as it has the range of interests from prehistory up to modern farming - with the milking machine - alongside the ecology – the river, the otters, the wildflowers, the butterflies – to pull it all together for people." (Local politician)

“Greystones (Salmonsbury) is steeped in local history...the place has been used as a meeting point for thousands of years, so if you wanted to gather local stories and oral histories, and gather people together, it would be a very good place for that.” (Archaeology student)

The quotes reveal a clear focus on the need for better access to information and for the stories and activities on offer to highlight how every action – human or environmental, past or present – within these cultural landscapes is interconnected and can have both tangible and intangible ramifications on heritage, wildlife, farming, economic and society beyond what may be obvious on the ground.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The above discussion has introduced the REFIT project, its key aims and some of the themes that are starting to emerge from the UK pilot studies. More detailed analysis will follow making comparisons between specific types of stakeholder, e.g. those connected to farming/land ownership, to draw out the nuances of relationships with current land management practices. The data from the interviews and focus groups will also be analysed alongside the perceptions maps, wider reaching surveys and a study of the digital photographic representation of the case study locations online. Integration of the multiple strands of perceptions research is essential to start to draw out strategies for the sustainable management of cultural landscapes that are sympathetic to the multifaceted nature of the lived environment and take onboard the symbiosis that exists between the activities, lives and histories that co-exist within cultural landscapes.

With the pilot study under way, the research is now being extended to the other case study sites. On completion, data from the perceptions studies, engagement events and summative evaluation will be analysed as a whole in order to develop guidelines for future best practice in the sustainable management of cultural landscapes that have relevance to other locations in the EU and beyond. It is hoped that this work will therefore offer practical solutions within the growing field of cultural landscape research that begin to bridge the gap between the facets of heritage, ecology, economy, society and culture that shape human life and the environment.

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